



## **GETTING HELP WITH PERSONAL AND FAMILY PROBLEMS**

SDPD Neighborhood Policing Resource Team

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Individuals with personal or family problems need to get help before problems get out of hand and cause further difficulties. Two problems that are most prevalent in society are substance abuse and domestic violence. Some resources that provide referrals and help with these and other problems are mentioned below. Help in conflict resolution can be obtained from various mediation services. Persons who are victims or witnesses of crimes can get help from the San Diego County District Attorney's Victim/Witness Assistance Program at **(619) 531-4041**. Also included is a description of the City of San Diego's JUST CALL information service.

### **ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE**

Individuals needing help with alcohol and drug abuse problems should call the County Health and Human Services Agency's Behavioral Health Services toll-free hotline at **(888) 724-7240** to get a list of organizations in their area that have treatment programs. Free material on the effects, prevention, and treatment of alcohol and drug abuse can be obtained by calling the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at **(800) 729-6686** or searching the Internet website of the Office of National Drug Control Policy at [www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov). Another source of information is The Resource Center of the State of California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. It can be reached at **(800) 879-2772** or [www.adp.cahwnet.gov](http://www.adp.cahwnet.gov) on the Internet.

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

San Diego County, in partnership with the Center for Community Solutions, now has a 24/7 Domestic Violence Hotline that provides crisis counseling, safety planning, referrals to various service agencies, and information on shelter bed availability, restraining orders and other legal aid, etc. The toll-free number is **(888) 385-4657**. Persons with existing domestic violence problems or cases should call the San Diego Family Justice Center's Domestic Violence Info Line at **(619) 533-6000** for assistance. That line is staffed Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Answers to many questions about domestic violence are contained in a consumer education pamphlet entitled *Can the Law Protect Me from Domestic Violence?* published by the State Bar of California. It is also on the Bar's website at [www.calbar.ca.gov](http://www.calbar.ca.gov). It and other pamphlets listed in Sec. 5.c below can be ordered by calling **(888) 875-5297**.

### **OTHER PROBLEMS.**

You can now call **211**, the new 24/7 national dialing code for information and referrals about community, health, and disaster services. Information is available on addictions, child care, clothing, counseling, domestic violence,

employment, food, housing, legal assistance, parenting, senior services, sexual assault, shelters, youth and teen services, and many other topics. This information is also online at **www.211SanDiego.org**. For immediate assistance on mental health problems you can also call the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency's Behavioral Health Services' toll-free hotline line at **(888) 724-7240**. Professional counselors are available 24/7 to help callers through their crises and refer them to appropriate services. Counseling is available in Spanish and other languages.

Another source of information on a wide variety of problems is the set of consumer education pamphlets published by the State Bar and available on its website at **www.calbar.ca.gov** by clicking on Consumer Pamphlets in the right-hand menu. These pamphlets deal with the following questions:

- How can I find and hire the right lawyer?
- How can I resolve my dispute without a trial?
- What should I know if I am arrested?
- What should I do if I have an auto accident?
- How do I use the small claims court?
- What can I do if I can't pay my debts?
- What should I know about divorce and custody?
- Can the law protect me from domestic violence?
- What should I know before I rent?
- What should I do if I am a crime victim?
- What can I do if I have a problem with my lawyer?
- Do I need a will?
- Do I need estate planning?
- Do I need a living trust?
- What are my rights as an employee?
- What can a lawyer referral service do for me?
- What should I know about serving on a jury?
- What should I know about elder abuse?

Also available on the State Bar website is a document entitled *Seniors and the Law: A Guide for Maturing Californians*. It deals with making ends meet, choosing where to live, obtaining health care and benefits, planning ahead, dealing with debt, staying on the job, getting around, handling elder abuse, avoiding consumer scams, and other topics. It is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Tagalog. Copies can be obtained by writing to The State Bar at 180 Howard St., San Francisco CA 94105-1639, or e-mailing to **seniors@calbar.ca.gov**.

Free legal assistance for seniors 60 and older in San Diego County can be obtained from the Senior Citizens Legal Services Program of Elder Law and Advocacy. Staff attorneys travel to community outreach sites on regular monthly schedules. Call **(858) 565-1392** for an appointment. And for the latest elder-care news and information, visit **www.sandiegoeldercare.com**.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Many personal and family problems can be resolved through mediation. By California law aimed at reducing court caseloads, the initial mediation sessions are free of charge. One organization you can call to negotiate restitution and resolve conflicts between victims and offenders arising from property crimes like theft, vandalism, burglary, and trespass is the San Diego Restorative Justice Mediation Program at **(619) 280-1993**. It also deals with conflicts between family members, e.g., parent-child. Mediation provides an opportunity for frustrated parents, unhappy children, and troubled families to talk about the things that bother them, set goals, and work out agreements to help them get along better.

To resolve civil disputes involving neighbors, landlords and tenants, family members (divorce and parent-child), businesses, etc., you can call the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC) at **(619) 238-2400** or go to its website

at **www.ncrconline.com** to open a case. A case coordinator will call you within 24 hours to gather information about your case. The NCRC mediates disputes free of charge through funding by the County of San Diego.

To deal with parent-child problems, the NCRC lists the following reasons to consider mediation:

- It's different from therapy.
- No one tells you what to do.
- What everyone has to say is important.
- Each person is listened to with respect.
- It works for 90 percent of the parents and teens who try it.
- Your family controls the outcome by forming agreements that work for those involved.
- It can prevent disputes from escalating to violence.
- It's confidential. No one reports anything that is said in mediation.
- You have nothing to lose.

## **CRIME VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE**

Help in getting emergency funds, applying for compensation by the State, and referrals to other agencies that provide assistance can be obtained from the San Diego County District Attorney's Victim/Witness Assistance Program at **(619) 531-4041**. Answers to frequently asked questions about being a crime victim are provided in a consumer education pamphlet entitled *What Should I Do If I Am a Crime Victim?* published by the State Bar. The text is available in English and Spanish on the State Bar's website at **www.calbar.ca.gov**. Or a copy can be obtained by calling the State Bar at **(888) 875-5297**.

## **CITY SERVICES**

Recorded answers to the most frequently asked questions about City services and programs can now be obtained by calling the City's JUST CALL automated information system 24/7 at **(619) 615-6111** or **(858) 549-1161**. General information can still be obtained by calling the City Information Center at **(619) 236-5555** Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.